



## WRITING

### Construct Progression

#### DOMAIN: LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION

**CLAIM:** Students can acquire the written communication skills that empower students to express their ideas, opinions, and knowledge for a range of purposes and audiences.

*This document was developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department and you should not assume endorsement by the U.S. Federal Government or the North Carolina State Board of Education.*

Copyright © 2017. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. All Rights Reserved. Licensed for free access and use, to be studied, copied, and distributed. Please do not modify from its original version without the express written consent of the NC Department of Public Instruction. Permission to copy not required. Distribution encouraged.

**Domain:** Language Development and Communication

**Claim:** Students can acquire the written communication skills that empower students to express their ideas, opinions, and knowledge for a range of purposes and audiences.

**Construct:** Writing

### Background Information

The writing progression should be used to assess a child's understanding that writing conveys meaning, has a purpose, and expresses the intention of the writer to communicate to an audience. This progression is about a cognitive process that enables children to explore and to articulate in writing their thoughts, ideas, opinions, and knowledge. Children's writing at different levels may include scribbling, letter-like forms, invented spelling, etc. ***This progression is not about the mechanics of writing (spelling, punctuation, capitalization) or penmanship.***

It is important for teachers to begin assessing writing as early as kindergarten for two fundamental reasons: (1) A child's progress in writing is one of the best predictors of how well a child will do in school; written and oral language are how children express their thinking; (2) Emergent writing is reflected in early learning and development standards in many states (e.g., writing letters and words, representing ideas with scribbles, drawing, dictating), and higher-level writing skills are typically reflected in state K – 3 standards and the Common Core State Standards. For example:

- Use writing and other symbols to record information and communicate for a variety of purposes.
- Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose in various genres.
- Write with a genre-specific organizational structure:
  - Opinion pieces that introduce the topic, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure.
  - Informative/explanatory texts that name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure.
  - Narratives that recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.
- Strengthen writing by revising and adding details as needed.

### Rationale

"One of the best predictors of whether a child will function competently in school and go on to contribute actively in our increasingly literate society is the level to which the child progresses in reading and writing" (Neuman et al., 2004, p. 1). As children write for every day, school, and subject- or task-specific purposes, they learn to express ideas, experiences, interests, and emotions and simultaneously have opportunities to learn the conventions of written language. The skills and performance descriptors within this progression include writing to convey meaning, writing with a purpose, and intention to communicate to an audience.

Writing itself is a cognitive process that enables children to explore and to articulate their thoughts, ideas, opinions, and knowledge. From a young age, they demonstrate approximations of appropriate written language genres (Donovan & Smolkin, 2006), such as storybooks (Sulzby, 1985) and informational genres (Donovan, 2001; Kamberelis, 1999). In addition to paying attention to different genres, children also need to consider the content and goals of what they will write. Throughout this progression, children's genre writing is demonstrated as they express their ideas and choose how to share their thinking (i.e., by labeling a drawing, telling a story, and relating learned content to others). Over time, they learn how to communicate their ideas to an audience, utilizing attention to conventions (such as structure, patterns, style, and word choice).

This progression does not include the mechanics of writing (spelling, punctuation, and capitalization) are not included within this progression. Mechanics are the things that do not exist in oral language but are part of written language. This construct progression focuses specifically on a child's understanding that writing conveys meaning and the connection that what is produced orally is translated to writing as they learn to communicate for a specific audience.

**Domain:** Language Development and Communication

**Claim:** Students can acquire the written communication skills that empower students to express their ideas, opinions, and knowledge for a range of purposes and audiences.

**Construct:** Writing

Writing			
Understanding	Skills	Performance Descriptors	Examples
Children understand that writing conveys meaning, has a purpose, and expresses the intention of the writer to communicate to an audience.	A. <u>Dictates</u> ideas, information, or stories to have them written down.	When given the opportunity to create a written product, child dictates own ideas, information or story for someone to write down.	<i>Jerome lost a tooth and asks the teacher to help him write a letter to the tooth fairy. Jerome dictates his letter to say, "Dear Tooth Fairy, I lost a tooth. Please send money. Jerome.")</i>
	B. Uses <u>drawings, scribbles, or letter-like forms</u> to express ideas, information, or stories.	When given the opportunity to create a written product, child draws, scribbles, or uses letter-like forms <u>and</u> articulates the idea(s), information, or story they express.	<p><i>Abby finishes drawing a picture about fairies. At the bottom of her picture she writes some letter-like forms. The teacher asks, "Can you tell me about your picture?" Abby tells the teacher the picture is about a fairy princess and her mushroom palace.</i></p> <p><i>Juan finishes a written product of scribbles. He shows the teacher his work and tells her this is a letter to his brother about playing at the playground.</i></p> <p><i>Lindsay finishes a written product of letter-like forms. She shows the teacher her work and tells her, "This is a grocery list for when my mom and I go to the store."</i></p>
	C. <u>Writes letters, words, or phrases</u> to label drawings or express ideas, information, or stories.	When given the opportunity to create a written product, child writes recognizable letters, words, or phrases to label drawing(s) or express ideas, information, or stories.	<p><i>Abby draws a picture about fairies. At the bottom of her picture she writes recognizable letters. Abby points to the letters and says, "My story is about a fairy princess who lives in a mushroom palace."</i></p> <p><i>Juan draws pictures for his informational book about the playground. He draws pictures of swings, a teddy bear, and a pizza. Underneath each drawing, he writes the words "swng" [swing], "ber" [bear], and "peza" [pizza]. Juan shows the teacher his work, points to the words, and says, "This is all about playgrounds."</i></p> <p><i>Lindsay draws a picture about going to the grocery</i></p>

**Domain:** Language Development and Communication

**Claim:** Students can acquire the written communication skills that empower students to express their ideas, opinions, and knowledge for a range of purposes and audiences.

**Construct:** Writing

Writing			
Understanding	Skills	Performance Descriptors	Examples
			<p>store with her mother. Beneath the drawing she writes, "I wint to the stor weth mi mom." Lindsay reads the sentence, "I went to the store with my mom."</p>
	D. <u>Writes</u> , demonstrating an understanding of <u>purpose</u> or <u>audience</u> or both.	When given the opportunity to create a written product, child expresses (verbally or in writing) the purpose of and/or audience for child's own writing.	<p>Abby draws a picture about fairies. At the bottom of her picture she writes recognizable letters. Abby points to the letters and says, "My story tells about the fairy princess who lives in a mushroom palace." The teacher asks, "Who did you write this story for?" Abby responds, "I don't know." The teacher asks, "Why did you write this story?" Abby responds, "I love writing stories about fairy princesses." (Abby's response conveys purpose [her love of writing stories], but not audience.)</p> <p>Juan draws pictures for his informational book about the playground. He draws pictures of swings, a pizza, and a teddy bear. Underneath each drawing, he writes the words "swng" [swing], "peza" [pizza], and "ber" [bear]. Juan shows the teacher his work, points to the words, and says, "This is all about playgrounds." The teacher asks Juan, "Who did you write this for?" Juan replies, "I want to teach my friends about the park." (Juan's response conveys both audience [friends] and purpose [teach].)</p> <p>Lindsay writes an opinion piece about her favorite things to do. She draws a picture about going to the mall with her mother. Beneath the drawing she writes "I lik to go to the mal weth mi mom to by toys." Lindsay reads the sentence aloud, "I like to go to the mall with my mom to buy toys." The teacher asks</p>

**Domain:** Language Development and Communication

**Claim:** Students can acquire the written communication skills that empower students to express their ideas, opinions, and knowledge for a range of purposes and audiences.

**Construct:** Writing

Writing			
Understanding	Skills	Performance Descriptors	Examples
			<i>Lindsay, "Who did you write this for?" Lindsay replies, "This is for my mom." The teacher asks, "Why did you write it?" Lindsay replies, "I'm not sure." (Lindsay's response conveys audience [mom] but not purpose.)</i>
	E. <u>Writes two or more related ideas</u> , pieces of information, or events.	When given the opportunity to create a written product, child writes about two or more related ideas, pieces of information, or events.	<p><i>Abby writes a story about fairy princesses: "Ther ones was to fary prinses. They went to the bal. They war pik dress." [There once was two fairy princesses. They went to the ball. They wore pink dresses.] (Abby wrote a story with two related events.)</i></p> <p><i>Juan draws a series of pictures for his informational book about playgrounds. He draws pictures of swings, a slide, and monkey bars. Underneath each drawing, he writes the words "swng" [swing], "slid" [slide], "mnki brs" [monkey bars]. (Juan wrote a <b>series of related words</b> about the playground. This example differs from previous examples because it shows two or more related pieces of information about the playground whereas the examples from Skills C and D show unrelated information about the playground [i.e., swing, bear, pizza].)</i></p> <p><i>Lindsay writes an opinion piece about her favorite things to do. She draws a picture about going to the mall with her mother. Beneath the drawing she writes, "I lik to go to the mal weth mi mom. My favrat stor is the toy stor." [I like to go to the mall with my mom. My favorite store is the toy store.] (Lindsay wrote an opinion piece with <b>two related ideas</b>. The second sentence is related to the first.)</i></p>
	F. <u>Writes using a genre-specific organizational structure</u> .	When given the opportunity to create a written product, child writes using an	<i>Abby writes a story about fairy princesses: "Thar ones wuz to fary prenz. Thay wur envitd to a bal. Thar</i>

**Domain:** Language Development and Communication

**Claim:** Students can acquire the written communication skills that empower students to express their ideas, opinions, and knowledge for a range of purposes and audiences.

**Construct:** Writing

Writing			
Understanding	Skills	Performance Descriptors	Examples
		organizational structure that is appropriate for the genre: narrative, informational, or opinion piece.	<p><i>animl frendz mad them prety pik dress. The prenz dansd in thar nu dres."</i> [There once was two fairy princesses. They were invited to a ball. Their animal friends made them pretty pink dresses. The princesses danced in their new dresses.] (Abby wrote a story with a narrative-specific organizational structure [beginning, middle, end].)</p> <p><i>Juan writes an informational book about playgrounds. On the first page he writes, "Playgrounds have many things for kids to do." Underneath pictures of swings, a slide, and monkey bars he writes "Kids can swing. Kids can slide down the slide. Kids can hang from the monkey bars."</i> (Juan wrote a book with an informational-specific organizational structure [Introduction and supporting details].)</p> <p><i>Lindsay writes an opinion piece about her favorite things to do: "I lik to go to the mal wef mi mom. I lik the mal becuz it has lots of stors. My favrt stor is the toy stor. I luv wen mi mom bis me toys." [I like to go to the mall with my mom. I like the mall because it has lots of stores. My favorite store is the toy store. I love when my mom buys me toys.] (Lindsay wrote her piece using an opinion-specific organizational structure [states opinion and supports opinion using details].)</i></p>
	<p>G. <u>Revises own genre-specific writing</u> to provide clarity to the reader:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revises by <u>adding</u> ideas,</li> </ul>	When given the opportunity to create a written product, child revises own genre-specific piece of writing to provide clarity to the reader, <b>either</b> by	<p><i>Example of G1 - <u>Revises by adding details after drafting</u>:</i></p> <p><i>Abby writes a story about fairy princesses: "Thar</i></p>

**Domain:** Language Development and Communication

**Claim:** Students can acquire the written communication skills that empower students to express their ideas, opinions, and knowledge for a range of purposes and audiences.

**Construct:** Writing

Writing			
Understanding	Skills	Performance Descriptors	Examples
	<p>information, or descriptive details.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revises by <u>rearranging</u> ideas, informative or descriptive details</li> <li>Revises by <u>deleting</u> unnecessary or unimportant ideas, information, or details</li> <li>Revises with <u>attention to writer's craft</u> (e.g., developing and elaborating through word choices, phrasing, sentence structure, length of sentences and paragraphs).</li> </ul>	<p>adding ideas, information, or descriptive detail; by rearranging ideas, information, or descriptive details; by deleting unnecessary or unimportant ideas, information, or details; <b>or</b> by developing and elaborating through word choices, phrasing, sentence structure, length of sentences and paragraphs.</p>	<p><i>ones wuz to fary prenz. Thay wur envitd to a bal. Thar animl frendz mad them prety pik dress. The prenz dansd in thar nu dres.</i>" [There once was two fairy princesses. They were invited to a ball. Their animal friends made them pretty pink dresses. The princesses danced in their new dresses.]</p> <p><i>After writing her draft, Abby revises it by adding more descriptive details about the characters. "Thar ones wuz to fary prenz. <b>Ther nams wer Prenz Ali and Prenz Kate. Thay wur the smatist prenz in the hole kingden.</b> Thay wur envitd to a bal. Thar animl frendz mad them prety pik dress. The prenz dansd in thar nu dres. <b>Win thay wnt hom thay wrote storees about the bal.</b>"</i> [There once was two fairy princesses. <b>Their names were Princess Ali and Princess Kate. They were the smartest princesses in the whole kingdom.</b> They were invited to a ball. Their animal friends made them pretty pink dresses. The princesses danced in their new dresses. <b>When they went home they wrote stories about the ball.</b>]</p> <p><i>Example of G2 - <u>Revises by rearranging ideas after drafting:</u></i></p> <p><i>Juan writes an informational book about playgrounds. On the first page he writes, "Playgrounds have many things for kids to do." On the second page, he draws a picture of a swing and writes, "Kids can swing." On the third page, he draws a picture of a slide and writes, "Kids can slide down the slide." On the fourth page, he draws a picture of</i></p>

**Domain:** Language Development and Communication

**Claim:** Students can acquire the written communication skills that empower students to express their ideas, opinions, and knowledge for a range of purposes and audiences.

**Construct:** Writing

Writing			
Understanding	Skills	Performance Descriptors	Examples
			<p>monkey bars and writes, "Kids can hang from the monkey bars." On the final page he writes, "Recess is a time my class plays on the playground."</p> <p>After writing the draft, Juan decides to rearrange his ideas. He moves the final page ("Recess is a time my class plays on the playground") to the beginning and moves the first page ("Playgrounds have many things for kids to do.") to the end of the book. When he is satisfied with his rearrangement, he staples the pages together to make his book.</p> <p>Example of G3 - <u>Revises by deleting unnecessary or unimportant ideas <b>during</b> drafting:</u></p> <p>Lindsay writes an opinion piece about her favorite things to do: "I lik to go to the mal wef mi mom. I also lik to go et piza wef mi frednz. I lik the mal becuz it has lots of stors. As Lindsay writes, she realizes that getting pizza with her friends does not go with the rest of her opinion piece and revises her writing. She crosses out the sentence "<del>I also lik to go et piza wef mi frednz</del>" and continues drafting: "My favrt stor is the toy stor. I luv wen mi mom bis me toys." [I like to go to the mall with my mom. <del>I also like to go eat pizza with my friends.</del> I like the mall because it has lots of stores. My favorite store is the toy store. I love when my mom buys me toys.]</p> <p>Example of G4 - <u>Revises by paying attention to writer's craft, <b>after</b> drafting:</u></p> <p>Juan writes an informational book about</p>

**Domain:** Language Development and Communication

**Claim:** Students can acquire the written communication skills that empower students to express their ideas, opinions, and knowledge for a range of purposes and audiences.

**Construct:** Writing

Writing			
Understanding	Skills	Performance Descriptors	Examples
			<p><i>playgrounds. On the first page he writes, "Playgrounds have many things for kids to do." On the second page, he draws a picture of a swing and writes, "Kids can swing." On the third page, he draws a picture of a slide and writes, "Kids can slide down the slide." On the fourth page, he draws a picture of monkey bars and writes, "Kids can hang from the monkey bars." On the final page he writes, "Recess is a time my class plays on the playground."</i></p> <p><i>After writing the draft, Juan decides to incorporate the writer's craft of headings to the inside pages. On the top of page two, he adds the heading "Swings." On the top of page three, he adds the heading "Slides." On top of page four, he adds the heading "Monkey Bars."</i></p>

**Domain:** Language Development and Communication

**Claim:** Students can acquire the written communication skills that empower students to express their ideas, opinions, and knowledge for a range of purposes and audiences.

**Construct:** Writing

## Resources

Calkins, L. (1994). *The art of teaching writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Calkins, L. (2014). *Writing pathways: Performance assessments and learning progressions, Grades K-8*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Clay, M. M. (2001). *Change over time in children's literacy development*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Culham, R. (2005). *6 + 1 Traits of Writing: The Complete Guide for the Primary Grades*. Portland, OR: Northwest REL.

Donovan, C. A. (2001). Children's development and control of written story and informational genres: Insights from one elementary school. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 394-447.

Donovan, C. A., & Smolkin, L. B. (2006). Children's understanding of genre and writing development. *Handbook of Writing Research*, 131-143.

Dyson, A. (1985). Individual differences in emerging writing. In M. Farr (Ed.), *Advances in writing research*. Vol. 1: Children's early writing development. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Dyson, A. (1986). Children's early interpretations of writing: Expanding research perspectives. In D. Yoden & S. Templeton (Eds.), *Metalinguistic awareness and beginning literacy*. Exeter, NH: Heinemann.

Kamberelis, G. (1999). Genre development and learning: Children writing stories, science reports, and poems. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 33, 403-460.

Graves, D. (1994). *A fresh look at writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Hansen, J. (1987). *When writers read*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Kissel, B.T. (2008). Apples on train tracks. Observing young children re-envision their writing. *Young Children*, 63(4), 26-32.

McGee, L., & Richgels, D. (2004). *Literacy's beginnings: Supporting young readers and writers* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Morrow, L. (2009). *Literacy development in the early years: Helping children read and write*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Morrow, L.M. (2014). *Literacy development in the early years: Helping children read and write* (7th ed.). Essex, England: Pearson Education Limited.

**Domain:** Language Development and Communication

**Claim:** Students can acquire the written communication skills that empower students to express their ideas, opinions, and knowledge for a range of purposes and audiences.

**Construct:** Writing

Neuman, S. B., Copple, C., & Bredekamp, B. (2004). *Learning to read and write: Developmentally appropriate practices for young children: A joint position statement of the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children.*

Accessed: [http://www-tc.pbs.org/teacherline/courses/rdla155/pdfs/c2s2\\_5devapprop.pdf](http://www-tc.pbs.org/teacherline/courses/rdla155/pdfs/c2s2_5devapprop.pdf)

Pinnell, G. & Fountas, I. (2011). *The continuum of literacy learning: Grades PreK-8.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Sulzby, E. (1985). Children's emergent reading of favorite storybooks: A developmental study. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 20(4), 458-481.

Sulzby, E. (1986). Kindergarteners as writers and readers. In M. Farr (Ed.), *Advances in writing research*. Vol. 1: *Children's early writing*, 127-199. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Temple, C., Nathan, R., Burris, N., & Temple, F. (1988). *The beginnings of writing* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.